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Prisoner in the Slime Pit™



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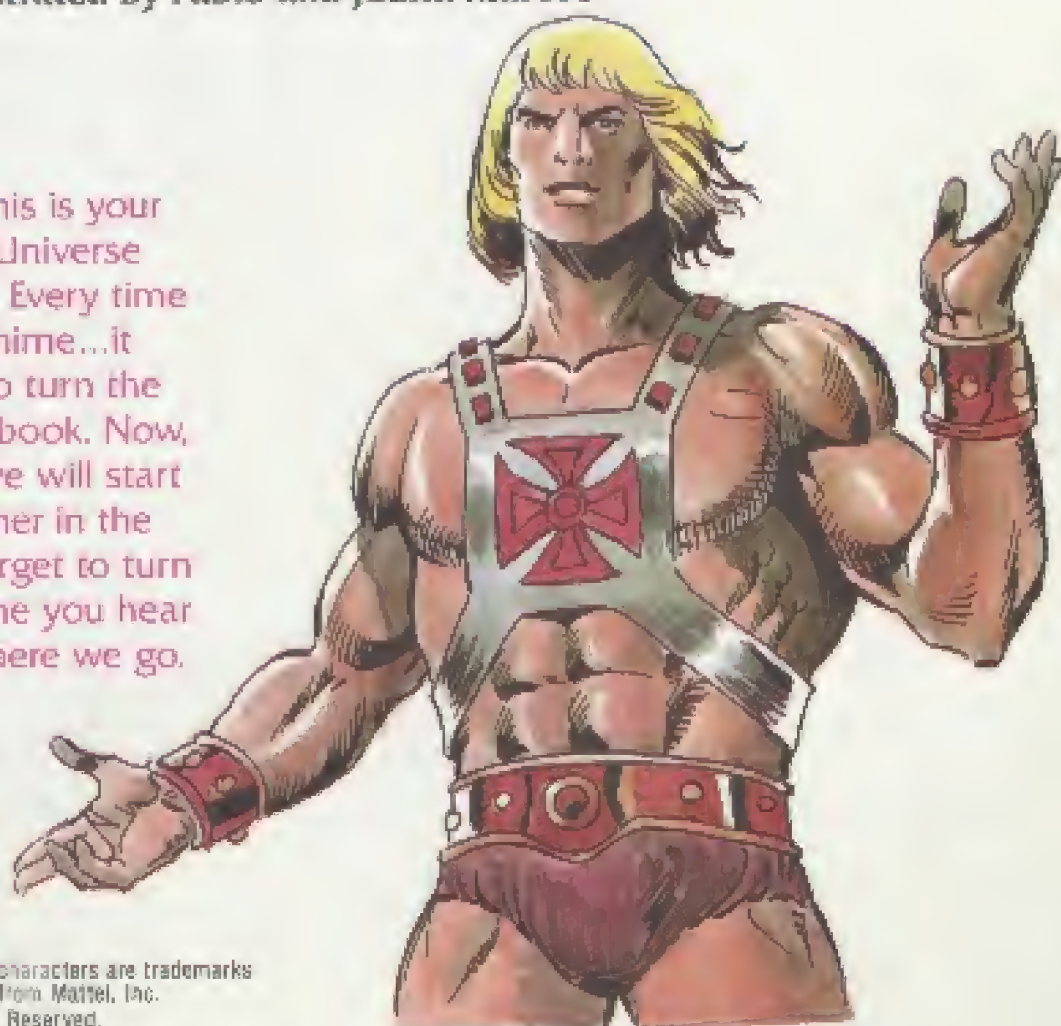
MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE™

Prisoner in the Slime Pit™

Written by John Braden

Illustrated by Pablo and Judith Marcos

Hi, everybody. This is your Masters of the Universe Read-Along Book. Every time you hear the chime...it means it's time to turn the page in your storybook. Now, if you are ready, we will start the story, "Prisoner in the Slime Pit." Don't forget to turn the page every time you hear the chime. Okay, here we go.



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The Slime Pit. Hidden away in a lost region of Etheria, this ancient site is one of the most feared on all the planet. Resting on a jagged stone base, the massive archway holds a frightening skull head. When an unsuspecting passerby crosses near the arch, a fearsome claw grabs him by surprise and holds him tight. Then the skull opens its mouth wide, and from between its jagged teeth comes thick, green slime. It coats the trapped warrior and makes him unable to move. If a warrior is trapped too long in the Slime Pit, he is turned into a Slime Monster, a creature with no will, a creature who is forced to follow the will of Hordak, the leader of the Evil Horde and the ruler of this evil trap.



In his dark chamber, Hordak cracked a cruel smile as he thought to himself, "The one man who has always escaped from me in the past is the one man I would most like to trap in the Slime Pit. Beware, He-Man! I'm not done with you yet! I've got a plan which will bring you to the Slime Pit. Two of my Horde Troopers have been sent to steal the Great Book of Wisdom from the library of Castle Grayskull. No doubt, He-Man, you will want this priceless treasure returned, and you will have to come to me to get it. My Horde Troopers will leave an easy trail for you to follow, He-Man, a trail which will lead you into the Slime Pit! Ha! Ha! Ha!"



Meanwhile, on Eternia, a cold gust of wind blew the curtains at the windows of Castle Grayskull. He-Man walked to one window and looked out. Behind him stood Rokkon and Stonedar, two heroic Comet Warriors. These brave fighters had recently come to Eternia to help He-Man in his struggle against the evil forces on the planet.

Seeing He-Man's frown, Stonedar spoke first. "What's wrong, He-Man? You look worried."

He-Man turned to face his friends and answered, "I've just learned there's been a robbery here at Castle Grayskull, right under my nose. A valuable ancient book, filled with history and mystical secrets, has been taken from the library. Man-at-Arms followed the trail of two sets of heavy footprints. They have been identified as prints of the Horde Troopers."

"Where did the footprints lead?" asked Rokkon.

"To a field nearby," explained He-Man. "And then they vanished! The Troopers must have stolen the book, then returned to Etheria through a space portal."

"What are we waiting for?" shouted Rokkon. "We can find that portal!"

"I don't know what I'd do without you two guys!" exclaimed He-Man. "Come on! We're off to Etheria to pay Hordak a little visit."





Once He-Man and his friends arrived on Etherla, Hordak's spies told their evil leader of He-Man's approach.

Hordak was pleased at the news and he shouted to a platoon of Horde Troopers, "The plan is working! The trail our Horder Troopers left will be easy for He-Man to follow. He'll follow it to the Slime Pit, where we'll be waiting for him! Ha! Ha! Ha! If he wants the Book of Wisdom back, he'll have to pay a price. A slimy price! Ha! Ha! Ha!"





As He-Man followed the trail that would eventually lead him and his friends to the Slime Pit, he warned Rokkon and Stonedar, "Be on the lookout for traps! That's Hordak's trademark. Tricks, traps, and treachery! There are hidden dangers everywhere. I don't even trust this trail. It's too easy to follow, and it seems to be leading into a dark region. Be careful!"

As night drew closer, the little light that was left began fading away. He-Man and his friends were on a road which led to danger.



By nightfall, Hordak's Horde Troopers had taken up their positions in the rocks that surrounded the Slime Pit. Hordak waited alone at the edge of the pit. He knew that He-Man would wait until dawn to show himself.

Eyeing the Slime Pit proudly, Hordak thought, "What a magnificent creation!



Once my Horde Troopers have overpowered He-Man, he will be a prisoner in the Slime Pit! He-Man will go first. His rock-brained friends will have to wait their turn. What a delight it will be to watch the mighty He-Man change into a Slime Monster! Ha! Ha! Ha!"



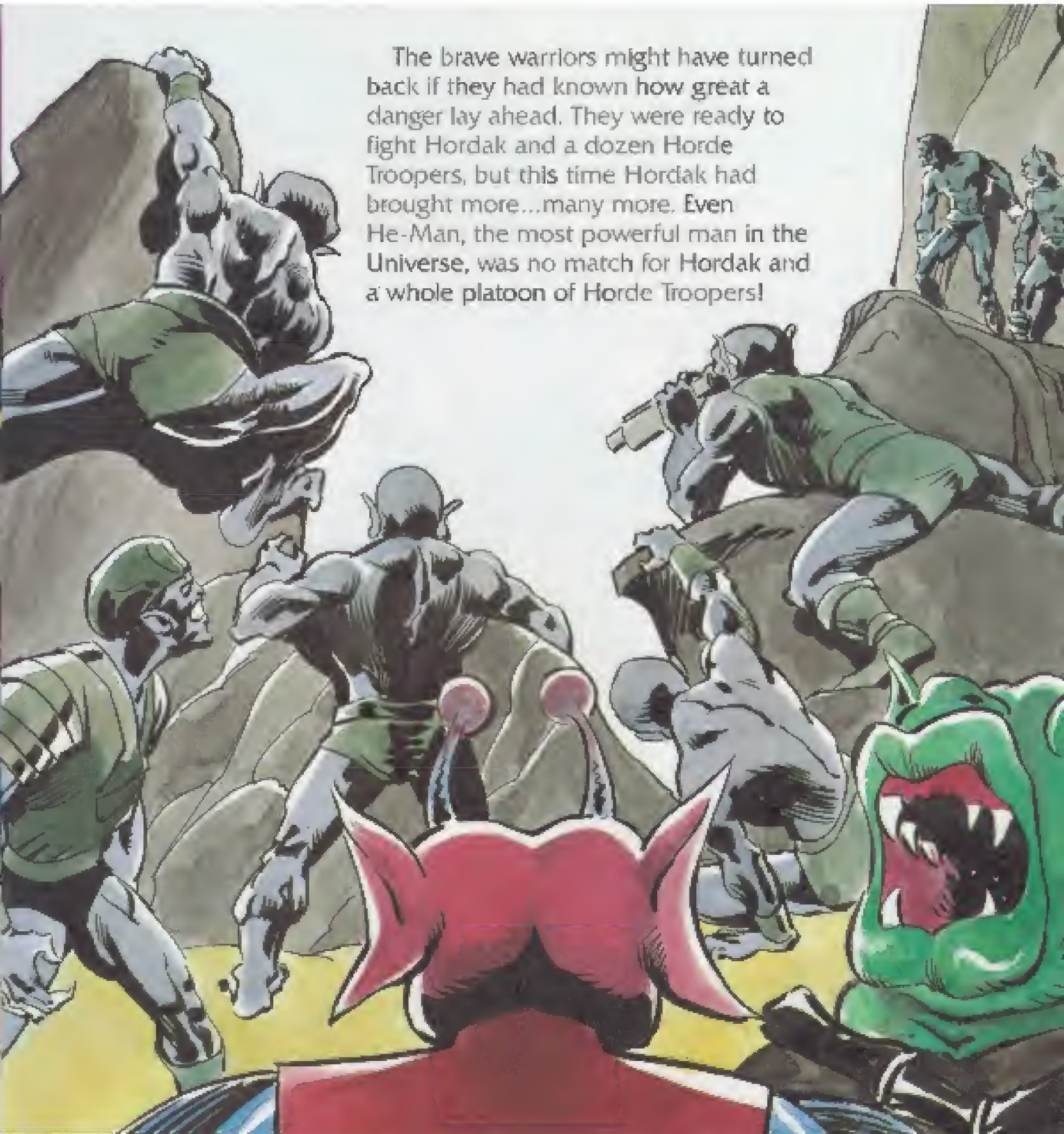
That night, He-Man and the brave Comet Warriors made camp. By the glow of a bonfire, the three planned for the day to come.

He-Man spoke first. "I'm sure Hordak won't be alone tomorrow. We'll have to be on our toes. A surprise attack could put us in danger."

Rokkon and Stonedar agreed with He-Man.

"I'm sure you're right, He-Man," said Rokkon. "But we'll be ready for Hordak and his friends."

The brave warriors might have turned back if they had known how great a danger lay ahead. They were ready to fight Hordak and a dozen Horde Troopers, but this time Hordak had brought more...many more. Even He-Man, the most powerful man in the Universe, was no match for Hordak and a whole platoon of Horde Troopers!



That night, as he slept, He-Man had a terrible dream. He was trapped and could not move. He was Hordak's prisoner in the Slime Pit. The harder he struggled, the deeper he sank into the cold, thick slime. He awoke in a sweat and looked around. It was dawn. Rokkon and Stonedar were already awake. Because they drew their energy from within their rocky bodies, the two Comet Warriors needed little sleep.

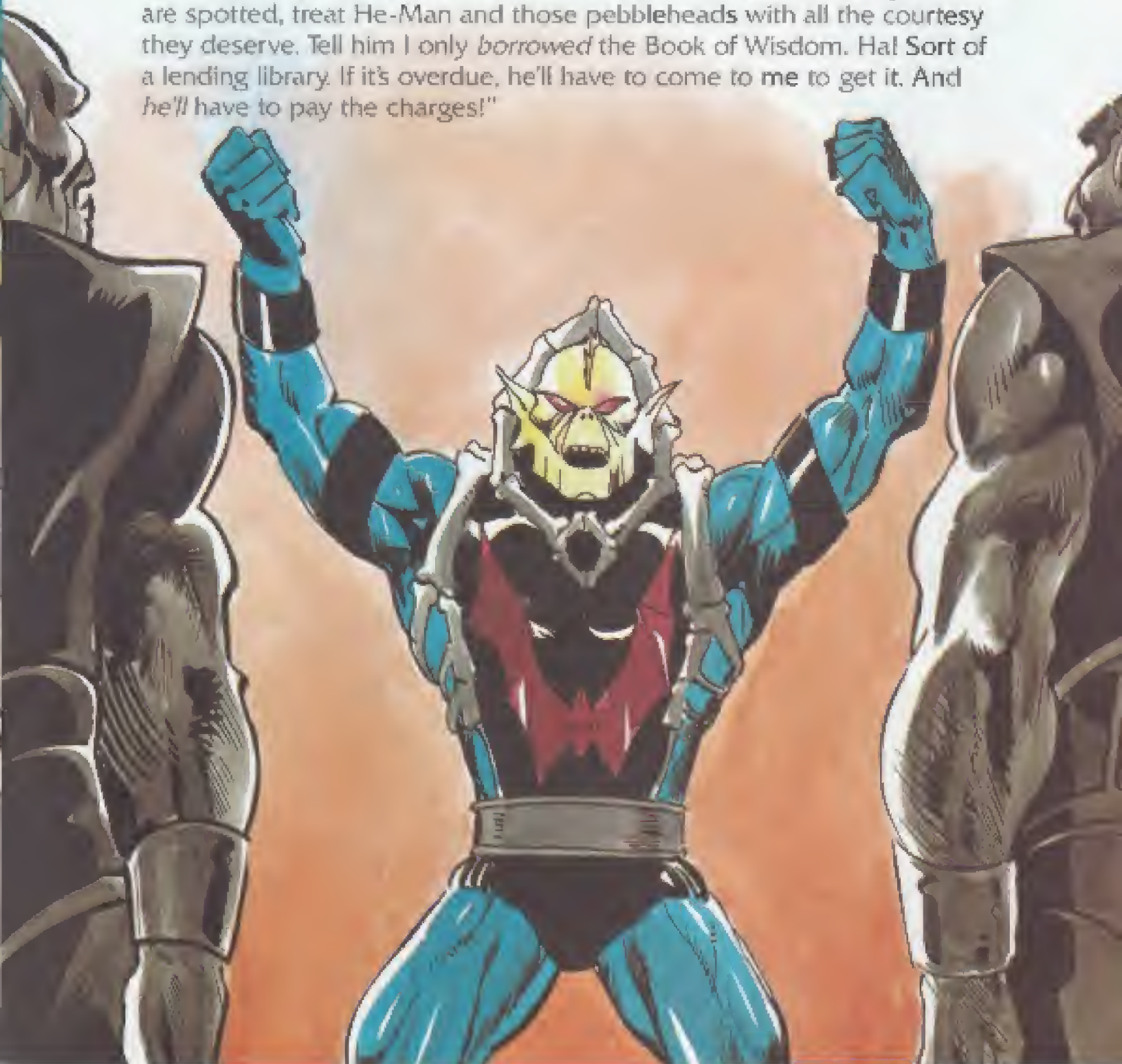
"What a nightmare!" shouted He-Man. "I dreamed Hordak captured me and put me in the Slime Pit."



"We'll have to make sure that dream doesn't come true today," answered Rokkon.

He-Man's nightmare was closer to coming true than he knew, for even as he slept, Hordak was giving his Horde Troopers their orders.

"Take your places around He-Man's camp. Do not attack or fight. If you are spotted, treat He-Man and those pebbleheads with all the courtesy they deserve. Tell him I only *borrowed* the Book of Wisdom. Hal Sort of a lending library. If it's overdue, he'll have to come to me to get it. And *he'll* have to pay the charges!"



It didn't take He-Man and his friends long to spot a Horde Trooper as he approached the camp, for his silver armor glistened in the pale morning sun.

The Trooper held up his hand and spoke. "He-Man, Hordak sends his greetings. He has asked that we escort you to him."

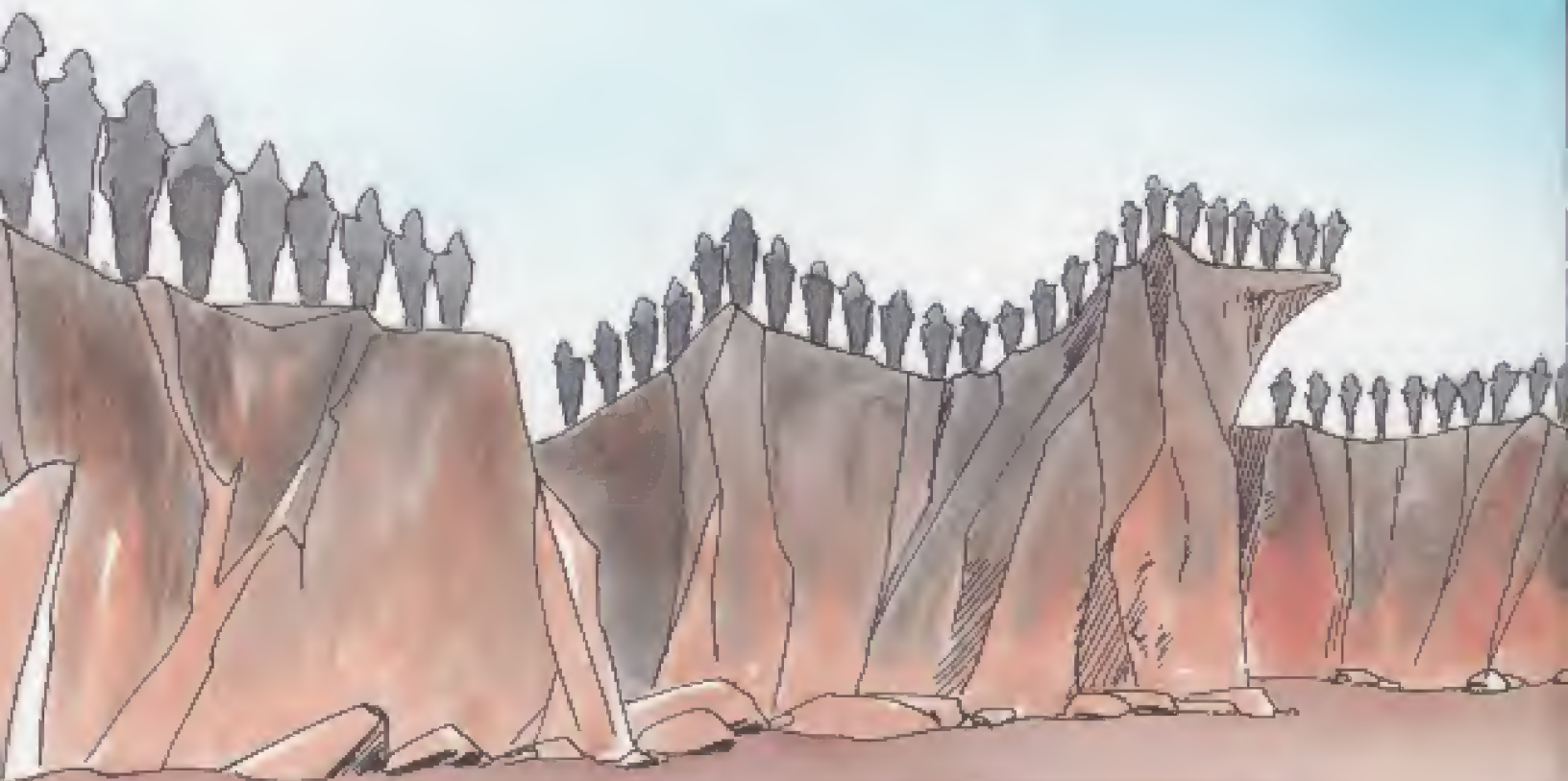
He-Man's first instinct was to fight the evil Horde Trooper. Then he looked around. This Trooper was not alone. On the crest of every hill, shoulder to shoulder as far as he could see, stood hundreds of Horde Troopers.

He-Man knew at once that he and his friends were surrounded and outnumbered. "Looks like I've got quite an escort," he said. "Why the courtesy, metal-head? Has Hordak sent you boys to charm school?"

Unsmiling, the Horde Trooper answered, "Hordak is a leader of peace. He feels that the time has come to put down the sword."

"If Hordak is a man of peace, then I'm Orko's uncle," said He-Man, laughing.

"You'll see," said the Horde Trooper. "Besides, you have little choice."



He-Man knew that the Horde Trooper was right. It had been a bad move to camp so close to the Slime Pit. Even though Rokkon and Stonedar had been awake all night, the darkness hid the Horde Troopers' arrival.





Completely surrounded now, He-Man and his companions were "escorted" to Hordak, who waited near the Slime Pit, dressed in his finest armor.

"Hordak is up to something," whispered Stonedar to Rokkon.

"But we have powers even Hordak doesn't know about," answered Rokkon.

"Welcome, He-Man," Hordak called out. "We have been enemies too long. I read your Book of Wisdom and found it most interesting. It's time we stopped this fighting. Come to me now and shake my hand."

He-Man could see that the path to Hordak would lead him directly into the



Slime Pit, so he stopped and called back, "You are the one who starts the fights around here, Hordak?"

"How you misunderstand me!" said Hordak in a hurt voice. "I want peace. It is time!"

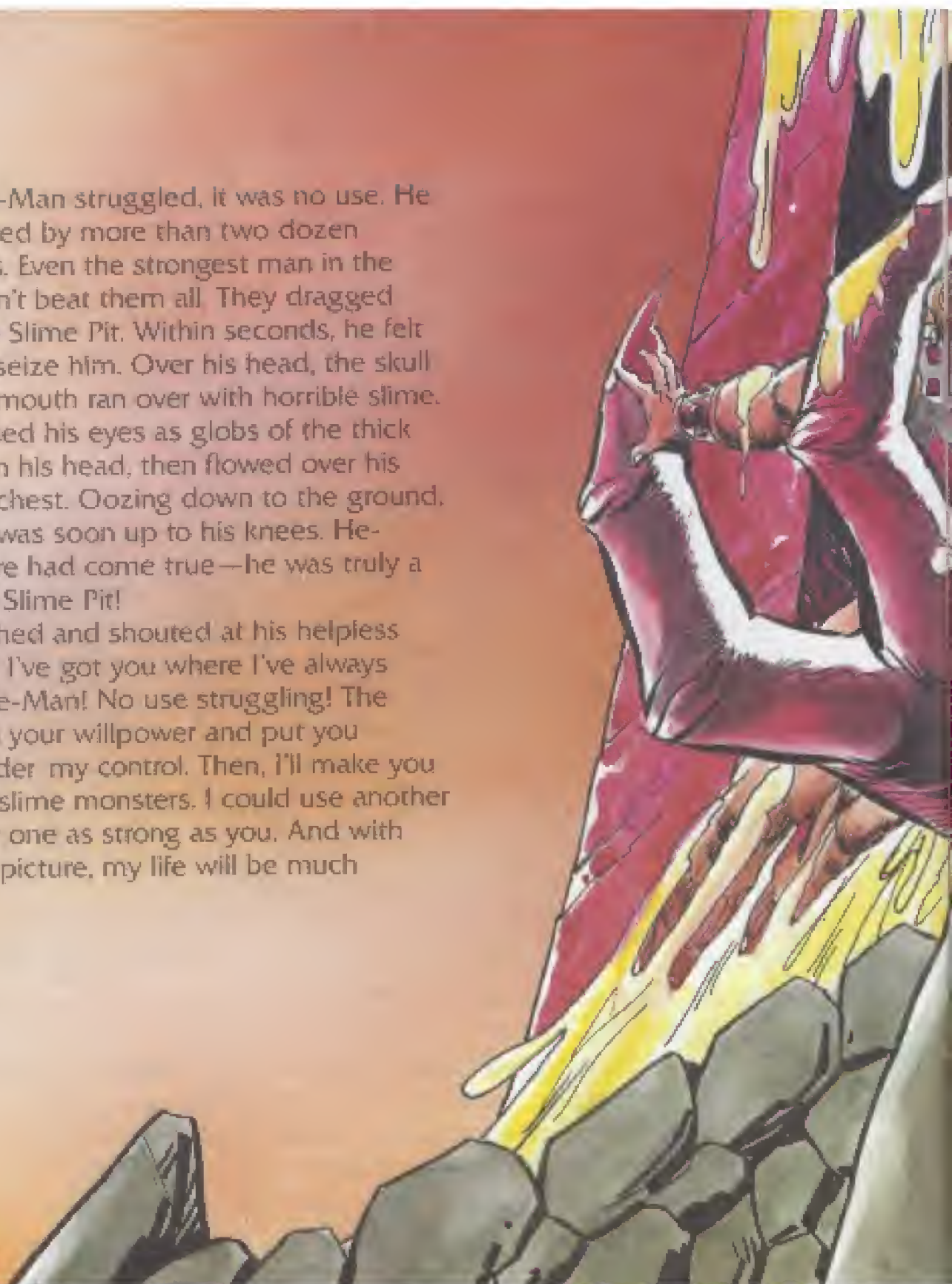
"You mean slime!" shouted He-Man as he ran clear of Hordak's guards.

"Seize him! Seize him!" screamed Hordak in unmasked fury. "I grow tired of talking peace. It sickens me. He-Man, you look dusty from your travels. You could use a bath, a nice long bath in the Slime Pit!"

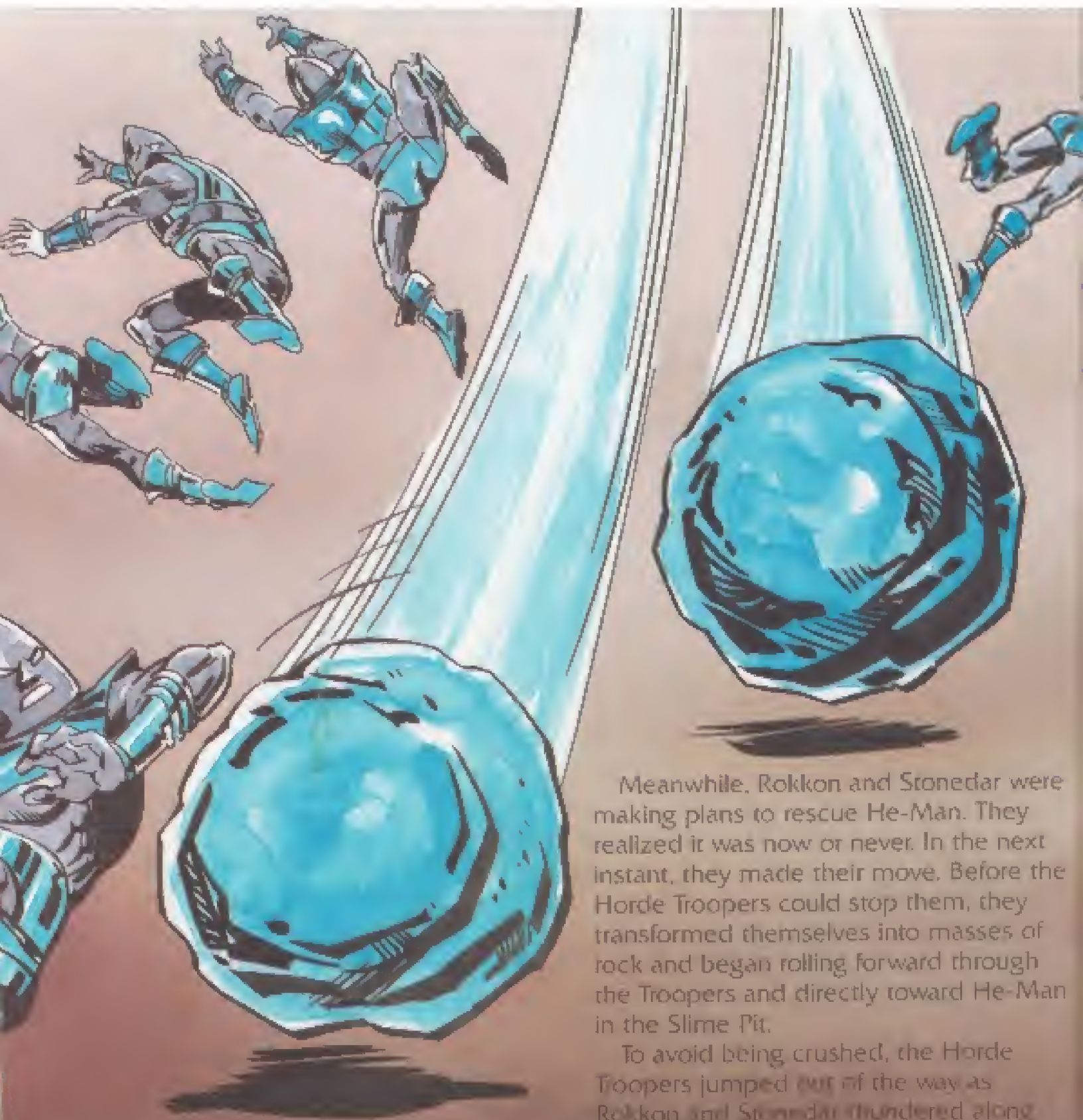
Although He-Man struggled, it was no use. He was overpowered by more than two dozen Horde Troopers. Even the strongest man in the Universe couldn't beat them all. They dragged him toward the Slime Pit. Within seconds, he felt the giant claw seize him. Over his head, the skull grinned, as its mouth ran over with horrible slime.

He-Man closed his eyes as globs of the thick ooze landed on his head, then flowed over his shoulders and chest. Oozing down to the ground, the cold slime was soon up to his knees. He-Man's nightmare had come true—he was truly a prisoner in the Slime Pit!

Hordak laughed and shouted at his helpless prisoner. "Now I've got you where I've always wanted you, He-Man! No use struggling! The slime will drain your willpower and put you completely under my control. Then, I'll make you another of my slime monsters. I could use another one, especially one as strong as you. And with you out of the picture, my life will be much simpler."







Meanwhile, Rokkon and Stonedar were making plans to rescue He-Man. They realized it was now or never. In the next instant, they made their move. Before the Horde Troopers could stop them, they transformed themselves into masses of rock and began rolling forward through the Troopers and directly toward He-Man in the Slime Pit.

To avoid being crushed, the Horde Troopers jumped out of the way as Rokkon and Stonedar thundered along

The Comet Warriors cleared a path through the enemy. The moment they reached the Slime Pit, they changed once more from comet to warrior. Grabbing He-Man in their mighty arms, they pulled him free of the Slime Pit.

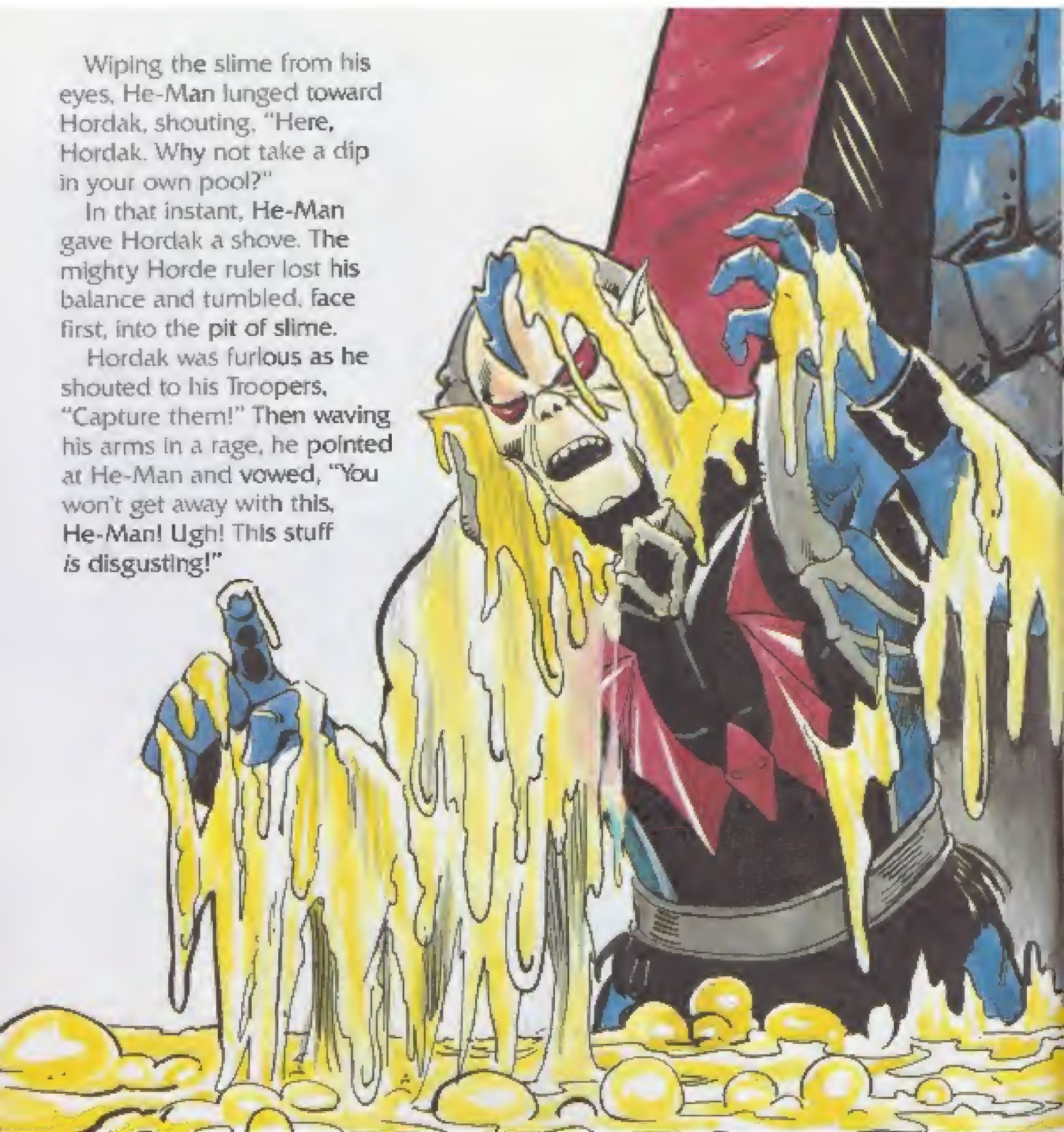
"Stop them!" shouted Hordak as he stood by the edge of the pit.



Wiping the slime from his eyes, He-Man lunged toward Hordak, shouting, "Here, Hordak. Why not take a dip in your own pool?"

In that instant, He-Man gave Hordak a shove. The mighty Horde ruler lost his balance and tumbled, face first, into the pit of slime.

Hordak was furlous as he shouted to his Troopers, "Capture them!" Then waving his arms in a rage, he pointed at He-Man and vowed, "You won't get away with this, He-Man! Ugh! This stuff is disgusting!"



Before Hordak's troops could react, Rokkon and Stonedar transformed once again into stone and began rolling back through Hordak's army, clearing the way for He-Man. Grabbing the Book of Wisdom from the ground where Hordak had dropped it, He-Man hurried to his friends. Soon they were away from the Horde Troopers and on the road to safety.

"Blast!" shouted Hordak. "He-Man has escaped me again! You idiot Horde Troopers will pay for this!"





A short while later, a safe distance away, He-Man, Rokkon, and Stonedar stopped to rest.

"You know, Hordak was right about one thing," said He-Man with a smile.

"What's that?" asked Rokkon.

He-Man's answer made them all laugh. "I really *could* use a bath. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

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